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Peter A. Dumbuya. *Tanganyika Under International Mandate, 1919-1946.* Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1995. xxiii + 282 pp. $42.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7618-0063-7.

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The First World War sparked a far-reaching debate in Europe and the United States about the purpose and future of colonialism. Those who considered themselves "anti-imperialists" and humanitarians, including the American president, Woodrow Wilson, insisted that "old-fashioned" imperialism threatened world peace. Wilson rejected crass annexation of the conquered German African colonies and called for a "free, open-minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims" based on the principle that "the interests of populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined."

At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, many British leaders hoped to annex most of Germany's colonies. Instead, Wilson coerced Britain to accept a plan that placed the German possessions, including German East Africa, under the supervision of the new League of Nations. This solution gave Britain control of German East Africa, but as a "mandate" within a framework of international accountability rather than as a "colony" or "protectorate" under national sovereignty.

For the first time, an international organization, through a Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC), had the authority to press a colonial government to comply with specific regulations, protect Africans from "abuses," and "promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and social progress" of peoples who were "not yet able to stand by themselves" in the modern world. Mandates formed "a sacred trust of civilization" and the larger world now held the imperial powers hostage to their own rhetoric. Still, Berlin complained that the mandates system allowed Britain to virtually annex Germany's former colonies. Many historians have agreed and have argued that the mandates differed only in name from other colonial possessions.[1]

Peter A. Dumbuya explores the impact of the mandates system on the British administration of "the Tanganyika Territory," the former German East Africa, from 1919 to 1946. A fresh interpretation of this subject is overdue, but Dumbuya claims his study "shows that British policies in the Tanganyika mandate, far from promoting self-rule and political independence for Africans, merely excluded them from political participation at the national level" (p. xiii). This is not a new conclusion.[2] Dumbuya also argues that Britain's colonial policies merely "strengthened British rule further and sought to enhance the political and strategic interests of the British empire in Africa" (p. xiii), but this too fits with older scholarly views.[3] Lastly, Dumbuya echos the sentiments of the League's harshest critics by concluding "the mandate system was a front for Allied territorial expansion at the expense of the defeated Central Powers" (p. xv).[4]

Dumbuya's book is a revision of his 1991 University of Akron doctoral dissertation and is based on secondary sources as well as a selection of public, diplomatic, and private papers. Specifically, he draws on American and British official publications, newspapers, the British Foreign Office "General Correspondence" files (FO 371) at the Public Record Office in London, published League of Nations documents, and the manuscript collections of leading American officials. Dumbuya does not include Tanzanian or German archival materials. He also does not use British Cabinet papers, Colonial Office papers, or the private papers of relevant special interest groups, British political leaders, colonial officials, and members of the PMC.

Tanganyika Under International Mandate is divided into nine chapters. The author explains the origins of the mandates system, American interests in the mandate system, the colonial administrations of Sir Horace Byatt (1916-1924) and Sir Donald Cameron (1925-1931), the issue of federation in British East Africa, and what Dumb-

uya describes as "the twilight years" of British rule in the mandated territory from 1933 to 1946. Chapter 3, entitled "Great Britain, the United States and the B' Mandates in Africa, 1919-1925: The Road to Confirmation," is probably the most effective. It relies on the papers of important American officials, including Arthur Sweetser, a member of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, and adds to recent studies of how the United States secured the same rights and privileges enjoyed by all members of the League in the tropical African mandated territories without ever joining the League.[5]

The book's flaws, however, run deep. The text is often unnecessarily repetitious and burdened by factual errors, but the central arguments suffer more from a lack of context. There is almost no discussion of the nature or importance of international law for international relations during the interwar period. Also, there is not enough analysis of the dramatic shifts in Britain's domestic, imperial, and foreign policies from 1919 to the end of the Second World War. More important, there is too little consideration of imperial ideology and the climate of opinion in which administrators, politicians, interest groups, and the League were working.

This lack of context produces certain problems for Dumbuya's analysis. Those who created and defended the mandates system were dedicated to a progressive agenda of gradual reform and pragmatic paternalism in Africa under international supervision.[6] Yet, the ambiguous promise to administer peoples who were "not yet able to stand by themselves," caused serious division and confusion among contemporaries.[7] Notions of "self-rule," "development," "self-determination," "trusteeship" and "independence" were even more controversial and often did not mean what they do now.

Dumbuya contends that "(s)elf-rule for Tanganyikans remained a distant goal and a cherished dream in the 1920s" and "the British government in the 1920s did not begin to fulfill its obligation to prepare Tanganyikans for the long road to political independence" (p. 148-149). He does not, however, explain what Africans and Europeans meant by "self-rule," "obligation" and "political independence," making it difficult to measure the actions of individuals by the contemporary expectations, aspirations, and limitations of their specific historical setting.

What is perhaps most troublesome about *Tanganyika Under International Mandate* is the source material. Newspapers and Foreign Office documents expose little about the British colonial policy-making process. American sources reveal even less. The sanitized published minutes of the PMC, London's equally superficial annual reports to the League, and other similar documents were designed to obscure internal policy debates, conflicts and confusion between government bureaucracies, and potentially embarrassing political problems. Both Geneva and London had a vested interest in avoiding damaging criticism that might undermine either the League's credibility or Britain's imperial legitimacy. For these reasons, the public record projected a purposeful image of cooperation and general agreement that obscures much about the influence of the mandates system on the administration of Tanganyika.

The League and mandates system were products of international law. The PMC had to rely on moral suasion, the threat of public condemnation, and the force of its own reputation to convince powerful sovereign states like Britain that conforming to international law was in their long term national and imperial interests. Thus, the meaning of the mandate for Tanganyika was often subtle and indirect, but significant. In 1938, Lord Hailey (himself the British member of the PMC from 1936 to 1939), in his extensive survey of Africa, noted that

Only those who have had experience of the internal working of an official administration, in circumstances where there is no organization of public opinion, can appreciate the strength of the influence which can be exerted by publicity of the nature of that involved in [the League of Nations mandates system] . . . It is not surprising, therefore, that many consider the value of [the system] to lie in the indirect influence of publicity rather than direct influence over policy.[8]

Dumbuya's book does not offer a close investigation of the extensive Colonial Office records concerning the mandated territory and the less public connections between the many people who were concerned with the administration of Tanganyika during this twenty-five-year period. As a result, he is unable to construct a convincing interpretation of either the complex nature of the British colonial structure that linked Tanganyika with the metropole or the multiplicity of individuals, interests, and ideas that gave shape to that structure. Such an approach is essential if historians hope to begin to evaluate the impact of both the terms as well as the spirit of the mandates on the perceptions and actions of those within this vast and changing imperial system that integrated a range of colonial, national, and international institutions.

Notes

[1]. For example, see Judith Listowel, *The Making of*

Tanganyika (London, 1965), p. 72; Wm. Roger Louis, *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies* (Oxford, 1967), p. 7; and Brian Digre, *Imperialism's New Clothes: The Repartition of Tropical Africa 1914-1919* (New York, 1990), pp. 196-199. For similar views concerning the French mandates, see Christopher M. Andrew and A.S. Kanya-Forstner, *France Overseas: The Great War and the Climax of French Imperial Expansion* (London, 1981), p. 184 and 235; Robert Cornevin, *Le Togo: Des origines a nos jours* (Paris, 1987), pp. 233-278; and Dieudonne Oyono, *Colonie ou Mandat international? La politique franaise au Cameroun de 1919 a 1946* (Paris, 1992), pp. 203-204.

[2]. See Walter Morris-Hale, *British Administration in Tanganyika from 1920 to 1945 with special references to the Preparation of Africans for Administrative Positions* (Geneva, 1969), pp. 301-308.

[3]. For example, see Harry A. Gailey, *Sir Donald Cameron: Colonial Governor* (Stanford, 1974), pp. 84-86; John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 325-341; D.M.P. McCarthy, *Colonial Bureaucracy and Creating Underdevelopment: Tanganyika, 1919-1940* (Ames, 1982), pp. 5-12; and J.D. Fage and Roland Oliver, eds., *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. 7, (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 671-676 and 689-692.

[4]. Dr. Heinrich Schnee, a German colonial propagandist and member of the German parliament during the interwar period, made this same criticism many times throughout the interwar period. See *Die Deutschen Kolonien under Fremder Mandatherrschaft* (Leipzig, 1922) and *German Colonization Past and Future: The Truth about the German Colonies* (London, 1926).

[5]. For example, see Andrew J. Crozier, "The Establishment of the Mandates System 1919-25: Some Problems Created by the Paris Peace Conference," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14, (1979), 483-513.

[6]. For a few useful studies of perceptions of empire among some the defenders of the League during the interwar period, see Partha Sarathi Gupta, *Imperialism and the British Labour Movement 1914-1964* (London, 1975); Penelope Hetherington, *British Paternalism and Africa 1920-1940* (London, 1978) and Stephen Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire 1918-1964* (Oxford, 1993). On Woodrow Wilson's view of race and empire, see John W. Coogan, "Wilsonian diplomacy in war and peace" in Gordon Martel, ed., *America Foreign Relations Reconsidered, 1890-1993* (London, 1994), pp. 71-89.

[7]. For a brief review of some of these debates in the 1920s, see Quincy Wright, *Mandates under the League of Nations* (Chicago, 1930), pp. 230-238 and 529-537.

[8]. Lord Hailey, *An African Survey: A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (London, 1938), pp. 219-220.

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